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EVST 573.01: Environmental Writing

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EVST 573.1 / Environmental Writing / Fall 2002 / Phil Condon
Office Hours in JRH 104: MWF 1-3 and by appt.
phil.condon@mso.umt.edu **243.2904**
Required Text: FacPac Reader / Condon at UM Bkstore

Course Description, Purposes, Hopes, Faith: Environmental Writing is designed to help you practice and improve your writing skills on environmental subjects for general audiences. (Along the way, your work, words, and questions will help us identify (temporarily) what we mean by “environmental subjects.”) I intend the course to challenge and broaden your reading and to inspire and encourage your writing. I hope we can create a community of writers based on honesty, courtesy, commitment to craft, and similar enthusiasms and goals—for good writing and a more thoughtful world. I have faith that you will produce writing that surprises and challenges yourself, your classmates, and me, and however directly or serendipitously, might engage, enliven, and wake up a weary world.

Primary Work: Three works: two essays & a significant revision of one. Sign up for 2 dates on schedule (see reverse), one in each “half” of semester. Work brought in on these dates will be read by class and me and discussed and returned in the next meeting. The third work is due to me by **Mon Dec 16**. In most cases, both works discussed in class will be new work and a revision will be turned into me, but I’ll welcome exceptions if you and I both want the class to discuss an instructive revision. You also may turn in a fourth work to me, i.e., a revision of each essay, but that’s optional and for extra credit only. If you do so, the first revision must be in to me within one month after it’s discussed in class.

Expected Essay Lengths: One essay should fall in a shorter range (5-10 pgs, 1250-2500 wds) & one should fall in longer range (10-20 pgs, 2500-5000 wds). These ranges allow for quite a variation in cumulative length of writing done in semester, but my experience is that each subject and every approach seeks its own particular depth and length, and as always, quality trumps quantity. My experience is that as you pursue the former, the latter will take care of itself.

Format and Writing Basics: double-spaced, double-sided, font standard and 12pt, 1” margins, pgs numbered. Carefully proofread and edit all work before turning it in. Talk to me if you need help with basic grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. Vital as these are, they are not the emphasis of this course, and it’s expected you have a fair mastery of them already. Most likely, I will hold at least one outside review on composition basics. Attendance will be voluntary.

Other Required Course Work:

- 1) Read your classmates’ work at least twice before class. Make response notes and questions in text as needed to be ready to participate and write a short, signed response to be referred to in discussion and returned to writer. Unless you feel that you’re a professional quality editor, please don’t line edit classmates’ works.
- 2) Read essays assigned in Reader. Write short responses, observations, & questions for class discussion.
- 3) Sometime before **Nov 20** class, turn in an expanded written response (**2 pgs**) to any essay in the Reader. The response might discuss the relationship between the essay and your work or writing aspirations in terms of form (approach, style, treatment, voice, conventions, tradition, mood, tone, etc.), between form and content in the essay, between form and the essay’s effect on the reader, or some combination of all of these.
- 4) Write one short “action” assignment that addresses some environmental concern and aims for an immediate “real-world” audience; revise it to print standards and mail it to the appropriate publication. Possibilities include letters to the editor of any newspaper or magazine, letters to any elected officials, written public comments on plans, sales, actions, etc. to any agency, official, corporation, or organization, guest editorials or opinion pieces for any newspaper or magazine. This work will be in a range required by intended publication, but in only a few cases (guest editorials?) be any longer than 250-300 words. A draft is due in class (with 3 copies) on **Sept 18**. We’ll work on them that night, and a revised draft is due to me **Sept 25**. (Exceptions are possible for folks turning in essays those nights). I’ll return work as soon as I can, either ready to send off, or for additional editing and revision. We’ll repeat that process until everyone has sent out their work. Bring published versions or acknowledgements to class as they occur, & we’ll compile them.

Grading: I don't assign letter grades to your writing; instead, I respond to it thoroughly in class and in writing. I base course grades on my best assessment of the quality of your essay writing and revision work, your completion of the action assignment & reading response, your contributions to the class & your classmates, and any extra credit work, roughly in that order. Ask me at any time if you want a tentative indication of your course grade.

EVST 573.1 / Condon / Fall 2002 / Course Schedule & Essay Draft Due Dates

All copies double-spaced, double-sided, 12pt font size, 1" margins all around, pgs numbered

Sept 4: First class: Orientation, Scheduling, Introductions, Discussion, Questions, In-class Wrtg

Sept 11: FP Rdgs Discussion, In-class Wrtg, In-class Edtg (weather permitting, meet outside, location TBA)

SIGN ONCE IN EACH ROUND BELOW: BRING ____ COPIES TO CLASS ON THOSE DATES

1st Round:

Sept 18 _____
Action draft due in class from everyone (bring 3 copies)

Sep 25 _____
Revised, edited action draft due from everyone (1 copy)

Oct 2 _____

Oct 9 _____
Award winning poet, essayist, Alaskan adventurer JOHN HAINES (18 books) to visit class 7-8pm.

Oct 16 *I'm out of town. Solo Field Trip Assignment. Locations TBA Oct 9.*

Oct 23 _____

2nd Round:

Oct 30 _____

Nov 6 _____
EVST Alum, firefighter, author DAVE STROHMAIER to visit class 7-8pm.

Nov 13 _____

Nov 20 _____
Two page response to Reader selection due from everyone.
Editor of Northern Lights Magazine Deborah Clow to visit class 7-8pm.

Dec 4 _____

Dec 11: Last class: Last discussion of student works
All revisions due tonight for those who want finals-week return & conference

Mon, Dec 16:--Noon: All revisions due

Mon, Tues Dec 16, 17, pm hours: Revisions returned and conferences scheduled as requested

Important UM Dates: 9/23-Last drop/Cyber; 10/14-Last drop/No \$ back;

12/6-Last Withdraw; 12/13-Last drop/grade petition

P/NP Policy: If you choose P/NP option, P = Course Grade C or better